(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that basmati rice producing areas in Uttar Pradesh, where the use of genetically modified paddy has been allowed would be destroyed by the infection caused by the said paddy;

(c) if so, whether Government would take any effective steps to prevent the same keeping in view the damage by genetically modified paddy; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) No, Sir, However, the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) has approved the confined experimental field of genetically modified (GM) paddy developed by M/s Maharashtra Hybrid Company, Mumbai during Rabi-2007 to generate biosafety and agronomic data at 11 locations, *viz.* Anand in Gujarat Bhandara and Rajgad in Maharshtra, South 24 Parganas and Midnapur in West Bengal, Gaya in Bihar, Ranchi in Jharkhand, Davangere and Mandya in Karnataka and Tanjore and Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu.

(b) As no experimental field trials on GM Paddy is being conducted in any parts of Uttar Pradesh, the question of destroying the basmati rice producing areas in the State does not arise.

(c) and (d) To prevent the possible contamination due to gene flow during experimental field trials, the GEAC, in accordance with the Indian Minimum Seed Certification Standards, 1988, stipulates stringent norms which include a minimum of 200 m isolation distance as well as biological and physical barriers. Further, in accordance with Hon'ble Supreme Court direction dated 8.5.2007, all applicants are required to submit a validated event specific protocol to detect the level of contamination at 0.01% LOD before initiating the field trials. The Government has also taken a decision not to permit transgenic research in crop commodities such as Basmati where international trade may be affected. The GEAC has also taken a decision that field trials with transgenic rice would not be conducted in proximity to basmati growing areas.

Protection of endangered animals

*304. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the population of the endangered animals, including lions, tigers and elephants, is dwinding in the reserve forests each passing year;

(b) if so, the details for the last three years; and

(c) the action proposed to be taken to protect these animals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) and (b) No. such reports has come to notice as far as lions and elephants are concerned. However, as per the ongoing the All India tiger estimation figures relating to four States (Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra), using the refined methodology endorsed by the Tiger Task Force, there is a decline in tiger population in areas outside tiger reserves and protected area. No significant change has been noticed in the status of tiger population in tiger reserves and protected areas of these States.

(c) The initiatives taken by the Government of India for conservation of wild animals including tigers, lions and elephants are given in the Statement.

Statement

Details of initiatives taken by Government of India to protect wild animals including tigers, lions and elephants

Legal steps

1. Amendment of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 for providing enabling provisions for constitution of the National Tiger Conservation Authority and the Tiger and Other Endangered Species Crime Control Bureau. The punishment in cases of offence within a tiger reserve has been enhanced. The Act also provides for forfeiture of any equipment, vehicle or weapon that has been used for committing any wild life offence.

Administrative steps

2. Strengthening of antipoaching activities, including special strategy for monsoon patrolling, by providing funding support to Tiger Reserve States, as proposed by them, for deployment of antipoaching squads involving ex-army personnel/home guards, apart from workforce comprising of local people, in addition to strengthening of communication/wireless facilities.

3. Constitution of the National Tiger Conservation Authority with effect from 4.9.2006, for strengthening tiger conservation by, *inter alia*, ensuring normative standards in tiger reserve management, preparation of reserve specific tiger conservation plan, laying down annual/audit report before Parliament, constituting State Level Steering Committees under the Chairmanship of Chief Ministers and establishment of Tiger Conservation Foundation.

4. Constitution of a multidisciplinary Tiger and Other Endangered Species Crime Control Bureau (Wildlife Crime Control Bureau) with effect from 6.6.2007 comprising of officers from Police, Forest, Customs and other enforcement agencies to effectively control illegal trade in wildlife.

5. In principle approval accorded for declaring eight new Tiger Reserves.

6. Independent evaluation of tiger reserves carried out by a panel of experts peer reviewed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), and placed before the Parliament.

7. Action taken for intiating the process for enhancing the relocation/rehablitation package for villages in the core areas of tiger reserve, apart from developing related norms, based on the report of a professional agency mandated with the task.

8. Action taken for providing eco-developmental inputs in the buffer areas of tiger reserves to foster coexistence with local people. The States having Tiger Reserves have been asked to prepare a plan for coexistence with local people by delineating a buffer zone, with cross sectoral eco-development inputs in the such areas.

9. Action taken for preparing eco-tourism guidelines to benefit local people.

10. Action taken for identifying the core or critical tiger habitats, as required under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, in the interest of tiger conservation.

Financial steps

11. Financial and technical help provided to the States under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes, *viz.* Project Tiger, Project elephant and Development of National Parks and Sanctuaries for enhancing the capacity and infrastructure of the States for providing effective protection to wild animals.

International Cooperation

12. India has a Memorandum of Understanding with Nepal on controlling trans-boundary illegal trade in wildlife and conservation, apart from a protocal on tiger conservation with China.

13. A Global Tiger Forum of Tiger Range Countries has been created for addressing international issues related to tiger conservation.

14. During the 14th meeting of the Conference of Parties to CITES, which was held from 3rd to 15th June, 2007 at the Hague, India introduced a resolution along with China, Nepal and the Russian Federation, which contains directions to Parties with operations breeding tigers on a commercial scale, for restricting such captive populations to a level supportive only to conserving wild tigers. The resolution was adopted with minor amendment. Further, India made an intervention appealing to China to phase out tiger farming, and eliminate stockpiles of Asian big cats body parts and derivatives. The importance of continuing the ban on trade of body parts of tigers was emphasized.

Road linkage for Najafgarh *via* Shyam Vihar

*305. SHRI DWIJENDRA NATH SHARMAH:
SHRI HARISH RAWAT:

Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of objections received by Government against Notification No. F.9(88)/2004/L&B/LA/176 dated 7.4.2006 issued on behalf of Lt. Governor, Delhi by Land and Building Department, DDA for construction of a road linkage for Najafgarh area *via* Shyam Vihar;

(b) the number of dwelling units likely to be uprooted due to the implementation of this project;

(c) the action proposed to be taken to stop the construction of this road to prevent large-scale uprooting of dwelling units; and

(d) the reasons for not constructing an elevated road?

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) Government of NCT of Delhi has reported that 652 objections were received against section 4 Notification.

(b) Approximately 288 dwelling units are likely to be affected.